

## **Digging Deeper – Ephesians 5:21–31** (*Instructions for Christian Households*)

Written by Robert Lee (Elder at MACC)

How are husbands and wives to conduct themselves in households that are committed to following scripture regarding this topic?

### **Day 1**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:21. Verse 21 is a repeat of the last verse from the previous Digging Deeper plan. This verse completes the thought introduced in verses 18–20, which addresses how being filled with the Spirit manifests itself in the believer's life. It also serves as an introduction to verses 5:22–6:4, about how members of a Christian family should relate to one another. Follow these instructions today: 1) What does it mean to submit to another (in general terms)? 2) Now include “out of reverence for Christ” in what it means to submit to another. 3) Discuss with your loved ones how including respect and admiration for Christ may have modified or enhanced your original thoughts.

### **Day 2**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:22–24. This verse calls on wives to submit yourselves to your own husbands in everything as you do to the Lord. In your own marriage, who does the Bible say is the head of you? Just as Christ is not inferior to the Father, but is the second Person in the Trinity, so wives are *equal* to their husbands. A wife's voluntary submission arises not from her husband's dominance, but out of her own submission to Christ. Therefore, if you are obedient, your submissiveness does not make you inferior to your own husband. If you are a wife, and are not submissive to your husband in everything, what did you learn from this scripture lesson that will help you become more devoted in your role as a Christian and wife?

### **Day 3**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:25a. This verse calls on husbands to love their own wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. In your own marriage, who does the Bible say is the head of you? Husbands are to emulate Christ's love, the kind of love that is willing to lay one's life down for another (John 15:13). As stated in Day 2, Christ is not inferior to the Father but is the second Person in the Trinity. So, although they have different roles, husbands are *equal* to their wives. Paul does not emphasize the husband's authority; instead, he calls on husbands to love self-sacrificially. Remember this day forward that the day you and your wife married, the two of you became *one* flesh in the eyes of God who joined you together for no man to separate (Mark 10:8–10).

### **Day 4**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:25b. This verse also speaks to husbands and wives on how Christ loved the church. Christ initiated the relationship and gave Himself up for it. Seven images describe the details of that relationship which serve as examples for how the relationship between husbands and wives is intended to be: (1) The Shepherd and the sheep {John 10:1–18}, (2) The vine and the branches {John 15:1–8}, (3)

Christ is the high priest and the church is a kingdom of priests {Heb. 5:1–10; 7:1; 8:6; 1 Pet. 2:5–9}, (4) The cornerstone and building stones {1 Cor. 3:9; 13:1–13; Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Pet. 2:5}, (5) The head and many-membered body {1 Cor. 12:12–13, 27; Eph. 4:4}, (6) The last Adam and new creation {1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 2 Cor. 5:17}, and (7) The bridegroom and bride {Eph. 5:25–33; Rev. 19:7–8; 21:9}.

### **Day 5**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:26. Husbands, make your own wife holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word (refer to Acts 22:16 for more guidance). Read Ephesians 5:27. Husbands, present your own wife to yourself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Read Ephesians 1:4 and Colossians 1:22 for further guidance.

### **Day 6**

Pray. Read Ephesians 5:28–31. If you are single, keep in mind that singleness portrays the Christian's ultimate identity in Christ (1 Cor. 6:17). In Christ, we are fully complete, regardless of marital status. Although Genesis 2:18 states that it is not good for man to be alone, the true message of the entire church should reveal that no man or woman is ever alone. Ephesians 5:30 states that we are all members of his body. If you are married, set some quality time aside to celebrate the precious gift of marriage from God with your own spouse. Invite the Lord into your marriage if you have not done so already and keep Him forevermore in the center of your lives, as individuals and as a couple. May the Lord continue to bless and keep you in His perfect peace.